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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 WARSAW 000466

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [ORP](#) [RS](#) [PL](#) [CZ](#) [NATO](#)
SUBJECT: POLISH DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER DISCUSSES MISSILE
DEFENSE, PATRIOT BATTERY DEPLOYMENT AND NATO, US AND
RUSSIAN RELATIONS DURING A MEETING WITH SENATOR LEVIN

REF: WARSAW 375

Classified By: Ambassador Ashe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Poland's Deputy Defense Minister, Stanislaw Komorowski, said the decision to host the Missile Defense (MD) site was not an easy one and they hoped it would be fulfilled. Poland is counting on the Patriot deployment and he did not consider it a replacement for MD. He expressed concern that slowing or abandoning MD risks NATO also slowing pursuit of improved air defense systems and, therefore, a reduction in overall Alliance security. NATO resources are not evenly spread across the Alliance, therefore, her members are not equally protected. Poland wants to be seen as a strong NATO Ally and any US or NATO investment in Poland is good for the entire Alliance. Poland desires an increased US presence on Polish soil as a means towards greater modernization and strategic cooperation. The decision to host the MD site was not only pragmatic, but exemplified Poland's willingness to support an Ally who asked, and desires to be seen as a valued, strategic security partner. On Russia, Minister Komorowski thought Russia should be consulted and described the confidence-building measures they have offered. At the same time, he was adamant that Russia not have veto power over what he considered to be bilateral US-Polish matters. Ultimately, Minister Komorowski believed that fulfilling the political declaration agreed upon between the US and Poland, regardless of timeline, is the most important. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) Senator Carl Levin (D-MI) met with Deputy Defense Minister Stanislaw Komorowski on 16 April to discuss Missile Defense (MD) and the Polish perspective on the Patriot Battery.

POLISH THINKING BEHIND MISSILE DEFENSE

¶3. (C) Minister Komorowski said the decision to host the Missile Defense site in Poland was not an easy one, but one Poland gladly accepted. They hope the MD commitment will be fulfilled. The two documents, the Ballistic Missile Defense Agreement and the Declaration of Strategic Cooperation were adopted simultaneously, although they were separate documents. Fulfilling the political declaration, regardless of timeline, is the most important. Polish willingness to host the site symbolized the Polish way of thinking. Solidarity is deeply embedded into the Polish psyche and it is natural for Poles to find strength in numbers, strength gained through a common bond of like-minded people who share the same values of freedom and democracy. Solidarity also means that Poles come to the aid of Allies and operate in good faith when an Ally requests support. Poles are ready to defend others in NATO, not just herself. Poles are always ready to make such decisions since they serve a greater purpose. Polish cooperation on Missile Defense was seen not only as assisting an Ally in providing part of a system that

would protect the US from a ballistic missile threat from Iran or elsewhere, but also as a means to help protect other NATO members. It is a tangible sign of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Although the Iranian threat might not be directed against Poland, the agreement to host the MD site fit into the three pillars of Polish security and defense policy: membership in NATO, the EU and greater strategic cooperation with the US. The Polish public was extremely pleased by the comments made by President Obama in Prague that acknowledged the courageous decisions by the Polish and Czech people to host MD elements.

THE IMPACT OF ABANDONING MISSILE DEFENSE

14. (C) Minister Komorowski believed it would be a setback for the NATO Alliance if MD were slowed or abandoned. Emphasizing that security cannot be taken for granted, he suggested that any slow-down, or an outright abandonment, of MD would slow down NATO's pursuit of missile defense systems. In light of Iran's desire to pursue its nuclear ambitions as a means to gain influence in the region, abandoning MD is a risk he believed nobody should be willing to take. When asked by Senator Levin where the threats emanated from, Minister Komorowski said the greatest threats were unpredictable, thus the need for NATO to build an air defense system capable of defending against unpredictable threats.

PATRIOT IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR MISSILE DEFENSE

15. (C) Minister Komorowski does not consider the Patriot Battery to be a replacement for MD. He considered Patriot

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and MD to be related to one another, yet separate. The Polish public holds a very high opinion of the Patriot deployment to Poland as it's seen as one of the most important examples of US-Polish cooperation, US commitment to Polish security and modernization of the Polish Armed Forces.

The Battery is seen as a symbolic gesture of good will and an intention on the US side, in keeping with the Declaration of Strategic Cooperation signed by the two Nations, Foreign Ministers in August 2008, towards deeper cooperation, a larger US presence, and a tangible commitment to modernizing the Polish Air Defense systems. He viewed the Patriot deployment as the beginning of a better Air Defense system for the entire NATO Alliance. It also signals the beginning of a greater US presence on Polish soil and US intentions to develop the US-Polish relationship on a more strategic level over time.

AMERICAN TROOPS WELCOME ON POLISH SOIL

16. (C) Minister Komorowski described the other agreements working in parallel to the BMDA, such as those needed for the temporary Patriot Battery deployment and its eventual permanent garrison. The SOFA Supplemental agreement is viewed as something necessary not just for MD, but to support American troops on Polish soil. He believed the SOFA Supplemental would create a legal umbrella over US forces on Polish territory, enabling more to be stationed in Poland. Unlike Russian forces that were never invited onto Polish soil and never appreciated, Minister Komorowski described the Patriot deployment and garrison as a tangible, symbolic presence of friend who is both invited and appreciated. Poland's membership in NATO engenders positive public opinion in Poland, and the US is the most appreciated of the NATO members.

LET'S EXERCISE CAUTION WITH RUSSIA

17. (C) Minister Komorowski said MD should be considered a common system, part of a NATO or possibly even a global system that would lead to cooperation among other countries. If Russia wanted to be part of that community, it would be a very positive sign. Poland would welcome Russian involvement

in creating Missile Defense solutions, with the understanding that the Russians would not have a say in the actual effectiveness of it. Were they to have a say in the technical aspects of creating an MD system, one would have to question its reliability. Russia is still an unpredictable neighbor as reflected by her invasion of Georgia so any reliance on them would be unwise. If the Russian radar in Azerbaijan were to be used as part of a Missile Defense system, it should be used as part of a broader MD system and not as a substitute to the proposed Czech radar site. Consultation with Russia on MD matters would be okay, but they should not be allowed to hold veto power in a matter that was between the US and Poland, or multilateral among NATO members. Poland has offered multiple confidence-building measures that Russia has neglected to seriously consider. Komorowski believed Russia was using the notion of Missile Defense in Europe as a threat to the Russian people in order to maintain a certain level of fear among her own citizens. This fear, in turn, would ensure the Russian citizens turned towards their current leadership to protect them, thus keeping them in power.

TREAT US LIKE A STRATEGIC PARTNER

18. (C) Minister Komorowski said it was a shame that after 10 years as a NATO member, Poland is still referred to as a "new" NATO member. He described the uneven spread of infrastructure (manpower, equipment and installations) across NATO, noting the lack of anything substantial in the way of infrastructure in Central Europe. He believed that only a more even distribution of NATO resources across NATO would truly indicate that all NATO member states are equally protected. Any growth of a US/NATO presence in Poland, as well as the modernization efforts, benefit the entire NATO alliance. In the event of the need to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the assets would be ready to be used in or to be deployed from Poland. He said that Poland viewed Article 5 as the most important aspect of NATO membership. Furthermore, it is important for Poland to be seen as a strong NATO Ally. Poland is doing more than others in the security and defense areas as exemplified in their EU and NATO commitments, as well as support to the US in Iraq. Everything Poland is undertaking in the security and defense field serves a twofold, common interest: shared US-Polish security interests, as well as the broader security commitment to the international community.

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19. (U) CODEL Levin has cleared this message
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